

November 15, 1836

Called meeting to hear the committee's report of communication with the faculty:

A committee of the Society of Inquiry appointed to present the views of the society in regard to a recent order of the Faculty requiring recitations & Lectures on the first Monday of the Month as on other Mondays, respectfully, that it was with deep regret as well as surprise that the Society noticed the above mentioned resolution of the Faculty. The Society of Inquiry in this institution, as in other similar institutions in our land was established, as the Faculty is aware, to awaken the affections of candidates for the Gospel Ministry to the spiritual destitution of the world, and to enlist their feelings, their prayers & their energies in the great Christian enterprise of Consoling Mankind with allegiance of the True God. It was, as the Society humbly conceived, a wise provision of the Faculty of this institution at a former period to suspend for one day in each month some of the ordinary duties of the Seminary, that the minds of the members of the institution might be directed more particularly to the considerations of the wounds of a dying world. The observance of the day, as the Society has reason to believe, has been aided with glorious results in one at least, if not more, of the Theological Seminaries of our land. And the Society cannot but believe that the Separation of the first Monday in each Month from ordinary duties had had a hallowed influence on the Members of our beloved Seminary. However humble may have been the apparent result of our weak endeavours, we cannot but regard the Society of Inquiry as one of the Most important auxiliaries for the promotion of the great object of a Theological Seminary and we have the cheering belief that it is so regarded by some of the best & wisest divines in the Church at the present time. In other Seminaries, as in this until now, Societies of Inquiry, which managed exclusively by the Students; have been recognized as a part & a most valuable part of the exercises of these Institutions with which they are connected, and appropriate time has been afforded for the transaction of the business of the Societies. But by the recent resolution of the Faculty the Society of Inquiry of the Seminary is shut out as a part of the exercises of the Seminary, and if it maintains its existence at all, or at best if it prospers, it must be in despite of opposing circumstances. With recitations & Lectures at 9. 10 & 11 O'clock at noon & 2 & 3 P.M. & the observance of this Monthly concert of prayers at Candlelighting on the first Monday of the Month, it must be evident to all that there is no time left for the operations of the Society. The business of the Society in all its details requires much time and attention. Besides the time required for the regular public meetings the different committees need or ought to meet for consultation and action on the different religious & benevolent objects that are considered to them by the society. If time & regular time be not afforded for this purpose in all probability the operations of the Society will become crippled, if not totally stayed. To leave the business of the Society to be mishandled at irregular intervals or moments

caught or redeemed from the regular duties of the institution is in our view but the serving of the deeds of its dissolution.

The society would also state that we have never understood that the first Monday of the Month was originally set apart as a day of fasting — it having never, within our recollection been so observed, and our records affording no evidence of the fact. Now does the Society wish it to be understood that they propose to observe it as a day of fasting. Our wish & and our unanimous wish is that it be observed as theretofore — As a day for looking into the Condition of the Redeemer's Kingdom on earth as far as our limited perception & means may enable us to do so — as a day for communing with one another & will our hearts in regard to the Spiritual destitution of the world & our duties in reference thereto.

All of which is respectfully submitted.

Signed by the three members of the committee

November 25, 1836

A Meeting of the Society was called by the President & was opened with prayer. The following communication from the Faculty of the Seminary was read. Viz.

Union Th. Semy 23 Nov. 1836

Whereas the Students presented the Faculty a memorial petitioning the rescinding of the Resolution adding the first Monday in the Month to the Days of regular lectures & recitations, Wherefor, Resolved, that the Faculty regard with deep interest the existence & proceedings of the Society of Inquiry & would desire it's utmost salutary influence in promoting the piety of the students, & a missionary sprit among them & by no means design to adopt any measure which shall contradict the objects of the Society.

Resolved 2nd That the Faculty are still of opinion that as but a small proportion of the Students are occupied in preparing reports & these reports, if well prepared, must necessarily be prepared for the most part the previous to the day, the Time of the Students will on the whole be better occupied by continuing the regular exercises granting such indulgence as is found indisputable to those who have reports to prepare.

Resolved 3. That the Faculty are ready to adjust the times of the Lectures & Recitations so as to give appropriate opportunities for the meeting of the Society of Enquiry & also for the monthly concert.

Resolved 4. That from time to time the Faculty will grant to the request of the Students, a day or a part of a day, to be spent in special devoted consideration & enquiry respecting the great work of the conversion of the world, & only with reference to it.

Resolved 5. That the Faculty will cheerfully consider ideas on this subject at any future period if upon fair experiment, the course proposed in these resolutions should be found to militate against the grand purposes for which the Seminary have been instituted & the Society of Inquiry organized.

After the reading of the above communication from the Faculty the following preamble and Resolution were unanimously adopted.

“Whereas this Society, in view of the recent resolution of the Professors of the Seminary requiring lectures & recitations on the first Monday of the Month as on other Mondays, sent into the Professors a paper displaying their unanimous wish that that day might be observed as heretofore, and whereas the Professors have thought best to decline yielding to the wishes of the Society suggesting only the plan of granting occasional “indulgences at the request of the students” which plan appears to the Society altogether incompatible with its proceedings; — is fully convinced that for profit to be derived from its operations it is indispensable that time should be allotted for its meeting & for the performance of such duties as are required of its members, and as at the present junction no such time is allowed; — Therefore

Resolved that it is necessary that the regular meeting of the Society be suspended until such arrangements shall be made as this Society may deem suitable for resuming them.

The resolution was tabled until next meeting.

December 16, 1836

A vote was taken to present the resolution from the last meeting to the faculty. A recorded vote was taken – the first in its history: 6 ayes, 7 noes.

“The following resolution was then unanimously adopted: “Resolved that the Secretary be authorized a copy of the preamble & Resolution to the Faculty is especially requested.”

December 17, 1836

A member requested the president to call this meeting because he wanted to change his vote taken in yesterday’s meeting. The member did not understand the implications of his vote and requested to change it from “no” to “aye.” It was then moved that the entire proceeding from yesterday be reconsidered.

“The following Resolution was proposed & finally adopted with one dissenting voice.

Resolved it has been represented to this Society that the Professors of this Seminary are desirous of having a copy of the Preamble & resolution paper of the 25th of Nov. last, Therefor Resolved, that a copy of the aforesaid Preamble & resolution be forwarded to them by the Secretary.”

On Motion the Secretary was appointed to procure from the Secretary of the Board of Directors of the Seminary a copy of all the proceedings of the Board relative to this Society.

December 21, 1836

Called meeting to read the following correspondence:

“The Faculty having again taken into consideration the state and intention of the Society of Inquiry, and having satisfactorily ascertained that some, and perhaps most of the students — have been accustomed to devote the day to special reading & reflection on the subject of Missions, and their duty in reference to it, and being desirous not only to support but to encourage this practice and believing that the cause of piety might be greatly promoted by it,

Wherefore —

Resolved that the first day of every month be devoted to the cause of missions, & to transacting the business of the Society of Inquiry, & that whenever the first day of the month shall fall on the Sabbath the Saturday proceedings shall be so appropriated.”

The faculty then resolved to ask the board to concur (in accordance with Article 3, Section 3, of the By-Laws). And they further resolved to hold a prayer meeting on the first Monday of the month.